
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

G E N T L E M E N

Educated at *Eton* - College.

SEER MON

Presented before the

GENTLEMEN

of the Senate

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Preach'd before the

GENTLEMEN

Educated at *Eton-College*.

At St. *AUSTIN*'s Church, *London*.

On *December 6th. 1701.*

By *WILLIAM FLEETWOOD*, Fellow of
Eton-College, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
his M A J E S T Y.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Charles Harper* at the *Flower-de-luce* over
against *St. Dunstan's Church* in *Fleetstreet*. 1701.

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ST. R. M. O. N.

Printed by the

CENTLEMAN

Educated at King's College

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



To my Worthy Friends.

Humphry Gore *Esq;*
Francis Pemberton *Esq;*
Philip Percival *Esq;*
William Cradock *Esq;*
Thomas Betts *Esq;*
John Eekins *Esq;*

Stew-
ards.

[*Mr. Thomas Pellet.*
Mr. Henry Hoare.
Mr. Godf. Woodward.
Mr. Edward Progers.
Mr. James Ford.
Mr. Joseph Williams.

SINCE, Gentlemen, *it is at*
Your Request alone that I make
this Sermon Public, it will lye
upon You, to make it as useful as You
can, to Your Selves and Acquaintance,
by following the Advice it gives You
Your Selves, and encouraging them to
do the like. Nothing can do greater
Honour to Eton-School, than that
the World should see those who are E-
ducated there, distinguish themselves,
by Virtue and good Maners, as well
as

The Dedication.

as Learning. If this Discourse shall contribute any thing to this good Purpose, it will be worth Your while to have asked it of me; if not, I shall have lost my Labour, tho' not my good Intentions of doing You Service. I am Gentlemen,

Your Humble Servant

W. FLEETWOOD.

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

GENTLEMEN

Educated at *Eton*-College.

Job XXVIII. Ver. 28.

*And unto Man He said, behold, the Fear of the
Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from
Evil is Understanding.*

JOB is, in this place, endeavouring to perswade
his Friends, that they were mistaken in their
Accounts of God's Providence; that this was
not the Course he took in governing the World,
that the Good should always flourish, and the Wick-
ed always suffer, in this Life; that it was the worst
way of judging either of Men or Causes, by Events;
Since

Since God had not appointed any certain and inva-
riable Rule to act by, but acted always well and
wisely to be sure, but yet *by Counsels unsearchable,*
and by ways past finding out. That, tho' he had
made Man very curious and inquisitive, given him
a large and comprehensive Soul, endued him with
Abilities and Powers of great extent, and that he
was a wise, sagacious, understanding Creature, and
could search very deep and wide into the Causes and
Effects of Nature; yet that the Providence of God
in governing the World, in ordering and disposing
of Men's Persons and Affairs, was what they never
could arrive at, a thing remov'd beyond their reach,
a Secret not imparted to the World, but reserv'd to
the Knowledge of God alone. This is the Connexi-
on of this Chapter to the twenty seven going be-
fore. You would perhaps know, why God punishes
some Men, and not all, with the like Questions,
but all the Wit and Learning of the World can't tell
you why. *Surely there is a Vein for the Silver, and*
a Place for the Gold where they find it. And then
proceeds to sum up several Difficulties, wherein the
Wit and Industry of Men had succeeded in their cu-
rious and laborious Searches; but Verse 12. *where*
shall Wisdom be found, and where is the place of Un-
derstanding? Poor Man may tire and lole himself in
painful and sollicitous Enquiries, after the Reasons of
God's Government, but never shall be able to find
the Bottom of that Secret. And, to shew it was
not to be purchas'd by him, the seven next Verses
are employ'd to speak the Praises and the Value of
this Knowledge; and, at last, to put a stop to all
our Hopes and farther Searches, he tells us Ver. 23.
God understandeth the way thereof, and knoweth the
place

place thereof. He understands, and none but He, the Way and Method of his own Providence; He only knows the Place where Wisdom dwells; which only is within himself. And since he is not pleased to communicate this Knowledge, it is our safest and our wisest way to rest our selves content without it: To make no farther Searches after what is hidden on purpose from us, either because it would be useless to us, or else because we are too weak to bear it. But then, that he might not seem to refuse us any thing that is truly excellent, and serviceable to us in this mortal State, He imparts to us a Secret more desirable, and better worth our knowing by a great deal; and that is, how to govern and behave our selves, amidst the various and unequal Dispensations of his Providence; that, however the World might go, we might be safe if we would; telling us, that if our Searches were in earnest after Wisdom and Understanding, He would direct us so infallibly, that if we would but take the Course prescribed, we should not fail of arriving to what we aimed at — *And unto Man He said, behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.*

Secret things belong to the Lord, (saith Moses Deut. XXIX. 29.) but those which are revealed belong to us, and to our Children, that we may do all the Words of this Law. How God disposes of his Creatures, and how he orders all things here, is secret to the Lord, and will be so; and we with all our Reason cannot fathom that Abyss, and therefore it belongs not to us to enquire, or know: But what he has revealed, belongs entirely to us, and was revealed for that very purpose, that we might understand and practise it. And that,

in short, is this, that *to fear the Lord is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* This it is given to Man to know, this is enough to make him happy; this is sufficient, this is proper for him; this answers all the Ends of all the Wisdom and the Understanding in the World: Nor can the Knowledge of God's Providence or way of governing the World, nor the Knowledge of any thing, or every thing besides, compare with this; nor contribute near so much (if any thing at all) to true Happiness; this indeed is Happiness it self; that which gives us Ease and Peace of Mind, perfect Tranquility and Rest within, whilst we live here, and fills us full of good Assurances, and comfortable Expectations, for the future, and frees our Hearts of Fear, that troublesom uneasy Passion, all which together make up perfect Happiness.

By *The Fear of the Lord*, may be understood the Whole of Religion, it being usual enough in the Scriptures, to express the Whole of our Duty, by some remarkable and necessary part of it. Or else it may signify that Principle of Fear on which we act, the very bottom of all Religion, and without which there would be no such thing as Religion in the World. And it is here express'd by *departing from Evil*, which are Terms that signify the same thing; and so are *Wisdom* and *Understanding*. So that though there be two Sentences in the Text, yet they mean but one and the same thing; for he that feareth the Lord, will unavoidably depart from Evil; and there are Cases wherein Men would not depart from Evil, unless the Fear of God possessed their Minds. And he that feareth the Lord so as to depart from Evil, or that departeth from Evil be-

because he feareth God, is a wise and understanding Person. So that, turn it on which side we will, the Proposition still comes out the same, that *to be Religious, to fear God, to depart from Evil, is a Mans Wisdom and Understanding.* And this will appear more evident from these following Considerations. *First*, it is that in which all Sides and Parties are agreed, and therefore has the fairest Plea to Wisdom that can be. *Secondly*, it is that, without which all other Points of what we call Wisdom, will signify little or nothing. *Thirdly*, it is that, which of it self, and without the rest, is sufficient to denominate a Man Wise and Understanding. *Lastly*, it is that alone, which God appoints and designs us to be wise in, and therefore we may be sure, it is the best, and truest Wisdom. *First*, it is that in which all Sides and Parties are agreed, and therefore has the fairest Plea to Wisdom. All other Parts and Points of Wisdom are controverted; and Men argue with equal Heat, and equal Confidence, and almost equal Reason, one against the other, in defence of what they like themselves, and in subverting what they disapprove in others. That which is accounted Wisdom in one Nation, is accounted Folly in another, and sometimes little less than Madness. And that which has obtained in one Age with all Assurance possible, becomes, in the next, a matter of Dispute at least, and appears in another contradictory and absurd; and Men begin to wonder how their Fathers could be so perswaded, how they came to take up with such weak and such ill-grounded Principles, and build such senseless Superstructures on them; how they could miss such plain and reasonable Conclusions, as appear at first sight, and dwell so long in

Ignorance and Error. Nay, and the Opinions that have reign'd for many Ages, absolute and uncontroll'd, become at length, by some unlucky towering Genius rising up in Opposition, the matter of as much Derision and Contempt, as they were formerly of Wonder and of Veneration. With what an Arbitrary Sway did *Aristotle* rule the World for near two thousand Years? And all the Schools of *Europe*, *Asia*, and of habitable *Afric*, swore into his Words without Premeditation: They did no more suspect his Skill, than they would have done, had *Jove* himself (according to their Fancies) dictated from Heav'n. And yet the Wisdom of this Oracle, is now become the Theme of Declamation, and 'tis made a doubt whether he understood himself, or no; and Boys admire at the Succession of his Schools, and at the number of his Followers; and conclude the World was cheated, or asleep for so many Centuries of Years. And tho' his Philosophy be the greatest, yet is it not the only Instance of Peoples levity of Judgment, and inconstancy of Opinion in the Matters of Wisdom. Others have had their Reigns as well as He, and sway'd the Generations that they liv'd in, by the Truth, or by the Reputation of their VVisdom and their Learning; and yet we can recover little of these Men beyond their Names, and those we owe too, chiefly to the Confutation of their VVisdom and Philosophy by Others; who, either by Revenge or VVantonness, have undergone the same Fortune from succeeding Generations. So that the History of Learning is made up mostly of a continued Series of Confutations of former Opinions, and of new Ones substituted in their Rooms; to be in time
and

and order served as they were. And so it is in other Matters, the former *Politics* are now out of Countenance and Credit, and 'tis thought a VVonder how the World was govern'd by them; the former *Customs* appear ridiculous, and improper to their Purpose; and generally speaking, all particulars in which Men are suppos'd to exercise and shew their Wisdom and Understanding, are either antiquated by time, and laid aside, as things useles, or baffled by new Experiments; either one Age confutes the Wisdom of another Age, or one Party controverts the Wisdom of another in the same. And even the Science that pretends to Certainty it self, is subject to this variation; and Men write Books of *Demonstration* against each other, and shew (they think) by undeniable Conclusions, the Truth of different and contrariant Propositions. And all these things have happened, not from foolish and perverse Gainsayers, from Men of little Understanding and great Confidence, from Men that know nothing, and oppose every thing; but from Men of great Abilities, of deep search and thought, and equalling, in all Respects, the Parties whose Opinions they dispute against, and whose Judgments they oppose. . . But it is not so, with *fearing God and departing from Evil*; in this, all Ages, Times, and Places are agreed, all Parties have concurr'd in this, that this is Wisdom, this is Understanding. Even they who differ from each other, almost in every thing, and one would sometimes think for very differing's sake, yet are agreed in this. Even they whose Practice is stark naught, and every way absurd and wicked, yet give their Judgment and their Voice in Favour of this Wisdom: Nay, they whose
Judg-

Judgment is corrupted as their Practice, will give their *loud* Opinion and their publick Voice in behalf of Virtue and Religion, and conclude that it is Wisdom, that they may not be accounted foolish and unreasonable themselves. They will concur in Appearance at least, with the rest of Mankind; which shews that that is the general and prevailing Notion of the World, in which alone it is agreed on all hands; and therefore certainly it has the fairest plea, to be accounted Wisdom, and to be look'd upon as Understanding. If upon proposal of several Opinions of several People, we conclude that to be the likeliest and most probable in which the most concenter and agree, we were sure to gain the Point in behalf of Virtue and Religion, for they, as yet, have carried it without Contest. This indeed is matter of Judgment or Opinion only, for if we must conclude by *Practice*, we are as much undone on the other side, and sure to lose the Cause by almost as many Voices; but this is not the way to judge of Wisdom. But yet this Contradiction of Men's Practice, and Defiance bid to their Judgment, make much for the Truth that I am trying to Establish. For if neither a continual habit of ill Practice, nor the force of ill Examples all around, nor the Profit, nor the Pleasure of Sin, can so far corrupt Men's Judgments (in the general) as they shall pass them in favour of it; but that notwithstanding all this, and all their other Differences and Disagreements, they concenter all, and terminate all in this, that *to fear the Lord is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding*. The least we can conclude from hence is, that, abstracting from its being told us so in Scripture, it has in Reason and fair Construction, the fullest Plea to pass for Wisdom in the World. *Se-

Secondly, It is that, without which all other Points of what we call Wisdom, will signify little or nothing. Not that other Points of Wisdom are not useful and convenient, for they are more than so, they are absolutely necessary to the conducting us in our Affairs, and to the attaining of those Ends, which we are bound to pursue, *i. e.* Such things as we cannot live without, and which yet we cannot attain without being wise in many particulars, but this is hereby meant, that even the being wise in many, or in all Instances besides, without being Virtuous and Religious will signify little or nothing to the making People happy, which yet is the aim and end of Wisdom : So that nothing is hereby detracted from VWisdom and Understanding in any good and lawful kind, if it be in Conjunction with the Fear of God, and Love of Virtue, but without this Conjunction all other VWisdom is unprofitable, and contributes little to the making People happy ; for to be happy, it is necessary to be at ease, both in Body and Mind, in *Body*, as far as it is possible, but to be sure in *Mind*. And tho' the being Virtuous and Religious, will no more secure a Man against the natural and certain, or the accidental Evils and Misfortunes of Life, tho' they will neither make a Man of a stronger Constitution to bear, nor help to prevent most of the Evils that befall the Body, any more than any other particular sort of Wisdom will do ; yet Virtue and Religion will make any or all the evil States and Conditions of Life more easy and supportable than any other Wisdom of any sort will do. What Ease or Consolation is administered to a Man that lies under the Torture of some sharp and violent Pain, or some vexatious lingering Sickness, from the
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Consideration and Remembrance of having read a thousand Volumes, of knowing all the great remarkable Events of every Nation, of understanding all their Regiments, their Wisdom, and their Failings? to have searched into the inmost and most secret Recesses of Nature, and have persued her through all Difficulties and all Obscurities, to have sought out Countries unknown, and to have travell'd far and wide throughout the Universe, and have convers'd with them in all their several Languages, to have out-done the greatest Masters in their several Faculties, and have exceeded them in each his Excellency——all this affords a Man in his Extremities but little Comfort; no Joy or Satisfaction rises from any such Remembrances or Considerations. And yet these several Attainments are each of them accounted Parts, and considerable Parts of Wisdom. So that the Wisdom of Religion contributes more to the making People happy, than all the Wisdom of the World besides, as it makes the evil States and the calamitous Conditions of Life, more easie and supportable than all the rest can do. But then for the other part of Happiness, which consists in the Peace and Quiet of Mind, and without which Health it self, and every other Blessing, is as nothing; Religion is infinitely superiour to all other Wisdom, both as to getting it, and keeping it. For since to be truly happy it is necessary to be at ease, to be void of all Suspicion, and freed from Fear of Danger of any Evils that may happen after Death, and that nothing can secure Men from these Fears but Virtue and Religion, 'tis evident that they contribute all to the making People truly happy, and that all other Wisdom signifies but little. It is impossible but that all
Men

Men should be conscious of their Guilt, conscious of offending God, and they must also know that Punishment is always due to Guilt, and therefore that they are to look for Punishment : This is an unavoidable Conclusion, and the Mind will make it, in spite of all Opposition. And tho' the Delights of Sin, and the Variety of Diversions call Men off from thinking on these Matters seriously, and give them frequent Interruptions, so as to hinder them from making close and serious Applications, yet 'tis not possible for them always to decline these kind of Reflections, they will return and take their Opportunities, and leave their Sting and Torment in the Mind. This is that which spoils the Happiness of wicked Men, and embitters all their Pleasures ; there is something that perpetually haunts them, and pursues them with unwelcome Remembrances ; and in the midst of Joy, often dejects the Countenance, and fills the Heart with Sadness. And this, no Wisdom of the Earth can long prevent, or ever remedy ; this can be done alone by Innocence and Virtue, and Religion, by the Wisdom that is from above, the Wisdom of *fearing God and departing from Evil*. This can only keep the Mind at Ease and Quiet, this only frees it from those Jealousies, and sad Distrusts, that naturally attend Men's evil Practices, and from the Dread of Punishment that Reason tells them must be consequent of Guilt. It is too dangerous a thing to make the Experiment ones self, and therefore let another be advis'd withall that has, let him be ask'd, Whether the Remembrance of having been as wise and cunning in his Dealings, of having understood the Interest of all Nations, and especially his own, of having read all Books, and travelled all Countries,

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tries, and spoken all Languages, as any one whatever, if any such Remembrances as these afforded any Quiet to his Mind, if they vanquish'd any Fears, or gave him any Hopes, that his Guilt was washed away, that the Punishment of his Iniquity should not overtake him, that he might lie down in the Grave with Peace, and rise again to any Joy or Recompence. If the Reflection on any past Felicities, the Acquisition of a fair Estate, the bearing many honourable Offices, the having contracted great Relations, Friendship, and Dependencies, the having liv'd a Life of Mirth and Luxury, and having had the World at will, has been able to lay the least Rising of his Conscience, to prevent the smallest Pang, or cure the lightest jealousy and diffidence of Heart? And yet Men think themselves, and the World accounts them very wise, that have so ordered their Affairs, as to be Masters of these matters, and attain to these Abilities. They are in truth, so far from administering any Ease or Comfort to the Mind in its Distress, that either they are never thought upon at all, in such a State or Season, or thought upon with Trouble and Concern. But Virtue and Religion feed the Mind perpetually, and cause it to forget all its Afflictions; the Joy of Innocence raises the Soul above Oppression; and a lively Sense of God's Favour relieves Men under the forest Evils and Distresses of this Life. Now if it be impossible to be truly happy without this Ease and Peace of Mind, and that this Peace is mostly wanted and most serviceable in the Days of Tryal, in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sicknes, or other Adversity, and that all other Parts and Points of Wisdom, single or combin'd, can in no Measure or Degree afford it, and this Religious

ligious Wisdom can, it must needs be evident, that this is that without which all other parts of Wisdom signify little or nothing, *i. e.* contribute little or nothing to the making People truly happy. And since it is the End and Aim of Wisdom to make Men happy, that which contributes little to the attaining of that end, will hardly deserve so good a Name; at least, it will never come in Competition with that Wisdom, which attains its end infallibly, as does the Wisdom of fearing God, and departing from Evil. But *thirdly*, it is that which, alone and of itself, is sufficient to denominate a Man wise and understanding, without any other Qualifications, and that, with as much Reason, as any other particular thing does, in that it aims at a certain End, and pursues it by means proper and convenient; and therein is our Wisdom chiefly seen and exercis'd in choosing its End, and in proportioning out, and pitching upon proper and suitable means to the attaining it. And this makes a Man a wise Scholar, and a wise Statesman, and a wise Merchant, and a wise Trader, for Wisdom is not tied to any one thing alone, but is exercis'd in any, and in every one; only, according as the End design'd is more or less excellent and desirous, and the means of compassing it, better or worse, more or less fitted to the attaining it, so is the Wisdom to be accounted greater or less: And therefore the Wisdom of fearing God and departing from Evil, is on the square with any other Part or Point of Wisdom, with respect to pitching on its End and Means; yet because that End is infinitely the best and noblest End, and because those Means are much the surest Means of compassing their End, therefore the Fear of God and

the departing from Evil, is much the best, the surest, and the truest Wisdom. And if any one, altho' but tollerably good End, and good Means pitch'd upon, and compals'd by them, be sufficient of it self, to denominate a Man wise and understanding, the pitching on the best of Ends and best of Means, must certainly be sufficient to the same purpose. Shall a Man be accounted wise, because he knows how many *Kings* govern'd in such a Country, and what great Accidents beset the State under their several Reigns? Or because he can number up the *Consuls* in their Order, and can, it may be, prove in many Sheets that such a ones Name is mistaken a Syllable more or less, and his year assign'd him too soon by three or four? Shall a Man be accounted wise, because he knows what Signification such and such a Word bore in the days of *Ennius*, and how it chang'd in *Augustus's*, and decay'd in *Trajan's*, and was perfectly lost in *Constantine's*? Shall a Man be almost ador'd, that can tell where the Politicians of old were found defective, and where they acted prudently and safely for the State? Or especially if he himself can foresee a Storm arising, and can prevent its falling there, by otherwise diverting it, or flying from it? Shall a Man be accounted wise, for having by Frugality and Industry, and by indifferent insight into Business, ordered his Affairs so well, that he is able to live handsomly, and keep a good House, and leave his Children and Dependents well provided for, or seen them well disposed off in his life time; for having amass'd a great Estate, by pleading handsomly, or trading cunningly, or venturing luckily by Sea? Shall a Man, I say, be accounted wise for having succeeded well in any of these particulars; and not

not be much more so, for having done the best thing in the World, in the best manner? for having secur'd an Everlasting Interest by fearing God and departing from Evil? by making himself as happy here, as Peace of Mind, and a good Conscience, and Security from every Evil and Danger of the other World, and the Hopes of Everlasting Happiness can make him? which is more than any or all the other Instances of the Wisdom of this World can do. And tho' there are several Exigences when Men may stand in need of, and desire very earnestly to be wise in such or such a particular Instance, yet when Men come to die, when they begin to think of giving an Account to God, how they have past the time of their sojourning here on Earth, there is then no Want, no Desire of any other sort of Wisdom than that of having feared God and departed from Evil. And yet this is the greatest Exigence, this is the greatest and the truest Tryal of the Excellence and Usefulness of any sort of Wisdom, that can be. And therefore that which affords the Mind the greatest Comfort, and when it is most wanted, is certainly enough to denominate its Master and Possessor wise and understanding, of it self.

But *lastly*, It is that alone, which God designs and appoints us to be wise and understanding in; and then we may be sure it is the best and truest Wisdom. It is that alone which he commands us to seek and to attain: That alone which he has promis'd to reward: And that alone whose Neglect he will punish; and therefore is the only necessary Wisdom. He hath not any where commanded Men, to employ their Time, and Pains, and Study, in the Searches of any sort of Wisdom but this. He hath given them natural Abilities,

Abilities, and bestow'd upon them all the Faculties that are useful or convenient to the attaining any sort of Wisdom, but it is with design that they should all contribute and be serviceable to this main Point, that they should all promote this heavenly Wisdom of *fearing Him, and keeping his Commandments*. He hath nowhere enjoined Men to be great Scholars, and wise Statesmen, excellent Lawyers, and dextrous Traders, or any other sort of Calling, but he permits them to be all or any of these, permits them to be wise in their Generations, and approves their Care and Industry, and blesses them in their Studies, and in the Prosecution of these several Ends and Points of Wisdom, provided they will first be wise towards God, and will first seek and secure the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the only Wisdom he *commands*. And this is *2dly*. the only Wisdom which he will *reward*. He will indeed reward the Effects of any other Wisdom, but then it is so far only as those Effects contribute to, and serve the Ends of this Divine Wisdom. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Statesman*, as far as it administers to the Glory of God and the Good of Mankind: He will reward the Wisdom of a *Judge* as far as it contributes to the doing Justice to all, to the suppressing Injuries, and helping those that suffer wrongfully. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Pleader*, as far as it contributes to the extricating Truth from out the Entanglements of fraudulent and cunning People, and setting it in its proper Light, and restoring to every one his own. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Trader* as far as it contributes to the employing and relieving the Poor, and the discharging honestly the Duty that he owes both to the Publick and his private

vate Relations. There is no point of Wisdom that shall go without Reward, if it be well employ'd; but it is the being well employ'd, *i. e.* to good and righteous Purposes, that can alone challenge this Reward, and to which alone it is engaged. So that here is no Discouragement to any honest kind of Wisdom, if it will be subservient to the noblest, best, and most superior Wisdom in its several Instances, but still the Reward is to it only as it is a part of this Religious Wisdom. And as no other Wisdom is to be rewarded, so neither will the want of any other Wisdom but this, be *punished*. A Man shall fare never the worse in the other World, for having frequently miscarried in his Business here, for want of Understanding, for having little Reach, slow Apprehension, for frequently mistaking, judging amiss, and without Consideration, and for having been a weak Man: But he shall be sorely punish'd for the want of this Religious Wisdom, there will be no Excuse or Plea that shall avail in his behalf; this kind of Ignorance will be unpardonable, and this appears most reasonable and just, because it is that of which all the World is capable; it is in every ones Power to be wise towards God, for otherwise it had not been made a general Duty. The Obligation of fearing God and of departing from Evil, had not been laid on all the World, if all the World had not, by God's Assistance, and their own Endeavours, been able to perform it. It had been hard indeed, if God had made any other kind of Wisdom absolutely necessary to be attained by all the World, and given no other helps than what we see he ordinarily does. If every Man had been bound under the Penalty of everlasting Death, to be a great Scholar,

a great *Mathematician*, or read in general *History*, or Wise in any one particular Instance; we should have been at a strange loss, if all Men were oblig'd to be rich and wealthy, and to attain to honourable Office and Employment, in the Court, the Camp, or City; these would have been extreamly hard Terms as the World goes, and Men would have thought themselves unkindly dealt withal, in such a Covenant. But that is not the Case with us, we are oblig'd to be wise in matters only, that are within our Compass, we are tied to such a kind of Wisdom, as every one is capable of getting, and getting as much as is required of us — and that is, *fearing God, and departing from Evil*. These are the Considerations that may serve to establish the Truth laid down in the Text, by *Job*, repeated again by *David* in the Psalms, and dwelt upon perpetually by *Solomon* in all his Writings, whose Authority, in this point, is superior to all others, in that he would not (though divinely taught) believe, without a thousand vain Experiments, that true Wisdom, and true Happiness were only to be found, in *fearing God, and keeping his Commandments*.

I will not allow my self to make a tedious Application of these Articles, they are easy, plain, and apply themselves, as soon as mentioned. The Purpose of your Meeting is, to do some Credit to *Your Selves*, and *the Place of Your Education*, and to renew those Friendships you contracted in your younger Age. You can do nothing better to the answering all these Ends, than studying to be Virtuous and Religious Men; this will make you happy Your Selves, useful to one another, and reflect the greatest Honours on *Your School*.

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Fame and Praise indeed, will Follow Learning without Virtue, but Fame and Praise are far from making People happy ; they have made some People very miserable, filling their Heads and Hearts with Pride and Vanity, and Self-conceit, and perfectly overfet them. They have sometimes undermined the very Ground they stood upon, and caus'd them to neglect those very Parts that raised them; by which we have seen Men of the greatest Hopes, end in Contempt and nothing. Nothing but Virtue can make Learning useful, and nothing else can make the Learned happy. See you a Man, of great Abilities, whose Mind is not seasoned with the Fear of God and good Principles, and you see him in a Disposition and Capacity of being a mischievous and perilous Creature, unfit for private Confidence and Friendship, or for Society and publick Trust. And as for doing Honour to the Place of your Education, it is impossible, without the being Virtuous and Religious ; that *Second Mother* can neither give it to, nor yet receive it from degenerate Children. She taught you Languages, and form'd you first to Industry and Diligence, to Application and Attention, to Truth and Justice, to Modesty, Submission, and Obedience, and every Virtue proper to your Age. She train'd you in the Fear of God, early, She made you wait upon him frequently, and bid you do it with all the Decency and Seriousness you could, composing your external Behaviour, to those great Notions you would one day have (She knew) of the great Majesty you were before. She taught you to observe the Discipline and Orders of *the Church*, and to revere

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that Constitution, that is Rival to the purest Ages of Christianity, and the Reproach to and immortal hatred of the present Corruption. And what will She not expect from a Soil so carefully and seasonably cultivated? She will expect all that is wise, and virtuous, and religious. And you will give it Her; you cannot otherwise do Her the Honour you intend

Hen. VI. by these Assemblings. The *King*, whose Birth glorified this Day, has in a publick Instrument declar'd, that he design'd his School should be *Magistra omnium Scholarum*. I dare engage one of his Ends was never better answered than it has been within our Memory, still is, and still is like to be: All things concur to make and keep it flourishing. It has excell'd all that that Prince could ever hope or wish for, in the point of Learning, already, (he died before the very Dawn of New Learning) but for his other End, good Morals, and Religion, his Hope and Wish will never be exceeded; for being a Prince himself, of exemplary Piety and Virtue, he aim'd at nothing less, than making others so, and so to the last Generation; so that we cannot answer fully to his Aims, without directing all our Studies to the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind, and that is our own Happiness. There is, I know not what kind of pleasing Pride, in reading that such a one, famed for his Learning, Wisdom, Piety, and Goodness, was bred in the same place, where we our selves were bred; it casts, we think, some sort of Honour on Us, and breeds a kind of noble Emulation in our Minds; it *should* do so; we owe it to Posterity, to leave them as fine Examples, as we found, and better yet, if it be possible.

ble. And I will not so compliment our Predecessors, as not to think the present Age will furnish out a number that will shine to future Generations, in all great Qualities and good, equal to any that have gone before you. You promise this, and you will make it good, by Learning, Virtue, and good Manners. I will make an end, without assuming any Liberty, to direct you what to do, or what to let alone, on these Occasions; your matter lies before you; you will only give me leave to say, that tho' this Day is given to Joy and Friendship, yet it will need a little Care to let it go no farther. We have begun with God, and must not end in any thing that will displease him: It will not become Men of Education, to let to-Day's Excess, furnish out matter of Repentance for to-Morrow; the Pleasure we propose to find in these Assemblings, would be too dearly paid for at that rate. Nor do I press these things as Fears or strong Suspensions, but as Cautions, that may not unbecome me in this Place. I should have dismissed you, with the Words of *Nehemiah* to the Jews ——— *Go your way, eat, and drink, and send Portions to them, for whom nothing is prepar'd* ——— but that I am prevented by the good Custom that has constantly prevail'd with you, of making such Collections as become your Qualities, and Liberal Education, and are indeed the Justification and the Honour of such Meetings. I have, therefore, nothing left to do, but to bless you in the Name of God, and to beseech him to fulfill you with the Riches of his Grace, to make you wise with the Wisdom that is from above, the Wisdom of fearing Him, and keeping his Com-
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mandments; that you may become eminent in all good Qualities, adorn your several Callings and Professions, do Honour to the Place of Your Education, be useful to one another, and to all Mankind; and after a Life made happy here by Piety and Virtue, be so for ever, in the World to come.

F I N I S.



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